

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Douglas School
other names/site number Douglas Community Learning Center, DHR File #138-5002

2. Location

street & number 598 N. Kent Street not for publication N/A
city or town Winchester vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Winchester (Independent City) code 840 Zip 22601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination X request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

McCartan *Spencer* 4/21/2000
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet. other (explain): _____
 determined eligible for the
National Register _____
 See continuation sheet. _____ Signature of Keeper
 determined not eligible for the National Register Date of Action _____

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**Douglas School
Winchester (Independent City), VA**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u>1</u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>4</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Cat: <u>Education</u> | Sub: <u>school</u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cat: <u>Education</u> | Sub: <u>school</u> |
| <u>Recreation and Culture</u> | <u>sport facility, auditorium</u> |
| <u>Government</u> | <u>police sub-station</u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> |

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Slate and Asphalt

walls Brick

other Later additions in concrete block

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1927-1949

Significant Dates 1927

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder LONG, R.V. - ARCHITECT
Gardner & Newcome of Stephens City, VA - contractors

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: John Handley Regional Library Archives, Winchester, VA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.46 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

- 1 18; 745362; 4342084 2 18; 745341; 4342022
3 18; 745392; 4342009 4 18; 745380; 4341968
5 18; 745679; 4341889 6 18; 745722; 4341994

☐ See continuation sheet.

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Section 7 Page 1

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Douglas School, located on the north side of the City of Winchester, Virginia, is situated in the lower end of the Shenandoah Valley between the Virginian Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains. Built in 1927, it served as the only Afro-American school in the city until 1966. The school has a central auditorium plan, which was developed by the Virginia State Department of Education. The envelope of the school is masonry with metal terne and flat asphalt roof and nine-over-nine wooden framed windows. Additions to the building were made in 1940, 1951, and 1962. The school was closed in the fall of 1966 when the Winchester schools were integrated. It continues to function as a learning center and neighborhood police station for the community. Four noncontributing resources are located on the school grounds.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Exterior

Douglas School was originally constructed in 1927 and made possible with funds from the John Handley Endowment. Like other examples of schools with the central auditorium plan built in the 1920s and early 30s, Douglas School is of brick construction on a concrete foundation. The dark red brick is laid in four courses of stretchers and a fifth course laid in Flemish bond pattern. Square masonry panels on either side of the entry portico are trimmed with stretchers and precast corners and a Flemish bond inset. Corners are detailed with elevated masonry quoins and a masonry belt course of light colored brick surrounds the building below the parapet. The roof is terne metal with a hipped configuration and gables at the four corners. A standing-seam metal roof covers the central hipped portion as well as most of the gable-roofed wings. A flat roof covers the auditorium/gymnasium portion of the building. Fenestration is nine-over-nine tall double-hung wood windows.

The design incorporates a combination auditorium/gymnasium as the core of the building off the primary Classical Revival entrance. The four-column entry with entablature and enclosed gabled end projects forward from the rectangular form of the structure. Steps rise from grade to the main entry pavilion and lead into the auditorium/gymnasium. The original floor plan of the building is simple and used

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repeatedly throughout Virginia with similar examples already listed in the National and Virginia Landmarks Registers in Loudoun and Augusta Counties. Eight classrooms are accessed off the central open space of the gymnasium, four on each side. Across the gymnasium from the entry is a raised stage with access from a hallway on the left and right sides. Boys and girls restrooms are located behind the stage.

Four noncontributing resources are located on the school property: two portable classrooms, located to the north of the building; a rectangular seating pavilion and a cinderblock shed located to the rear of the building.

Interior

Extant interior classroom details including wood floors and doors with transoms, chalkboards, chalk rails and coat closets are in good condition. The gymnasium floor remains in good condition. Some modifications have taken place with the addition of partitions in former offices and changes to the rear entry doors with the addition of a new cafeteria and newer classrooms. Each classroom is lighted by a group of five nine-over-nine wooden framed windows.

Three additions were added to the rear of the building to accommodate increased student population. Two classrooms were added in 1940. In 1951, a combination gymnasium/cafeteria, two dressing rooms, a library, a shop, and two dressing rooms were added immediately to the rear of the original school's footprint. The 1962 expansion included one classroom and a new home economics room, science room, and a band and music room, which were added along the rear of the building on a southeastern axis. Douglas School ceased operation in 1966 when the Winchester School District integrated its system.

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D-100-138-5002

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Douglas School, often referred to as Douglas High School, and now known as Douglas Community Learning Center, is located on North Kent Street in the northeastern section of the city of Winchester, Virginia. This impressive Colonial Revival school was built in 1927 partially with proceeds from a private trust bequeathed to the City of Winchester by Judge John Handley of Scranton, Pennsylvania. The architect for the building was R. V. Long who used the central auditorium plan developed by the Virginia Department of Education. The front portico with pediment and Tuscan columns, the nine-over-nine double-hung windows, and the transomed double doorway make it an excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture. Douglas School served as the only black school in Winchester from 1927 until 1966 when integration was established. The school also provided education for black students from surrounding areas as early as 1934. A cherished institution to Winchester's black community, Douglas School today is a learning center offering programs for children and adults.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

John Handley was born in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland, on January 27, 1835, the son of a carpenter. His father died when he was twelve years old, and young Handley immigrated to America around 1850. He became a citizen and established residency in Rochester, New York, where he took up the carpenter's trade and began to study law. Around 1856 Handley moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for the federal government. While in Washington, he met Catherine Thayer, a widow with a twelve-year-old son; they were married in 1857. After much private study and a session at the Law School of Columbia University, Handley was admitted to the bar in 1860. The couple then moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania. There Handley established his law practice and later served as a judge of Luzerne County and as President Judge of Lackawanna County. A portion of his income was carefully invested in bank stock, rental properties, and real estate (some of which contained deposits of anthracite coal) in and around Scranton. These investments contributed to his princely fortune.¹

Away from professional demands, the judge enjoyed visiting his good friend, James Jifkins, who had moved from Scranton, Pennsylvania, to Winchester, Virginia, around 1870. As a result of his frequent visits, Handley became good friends with many of the town's residents and purchased several large tracts of land in the area. Through legal business he became associated with Major Holmes Conrad, who later

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became his close friend and a major architect of his bequest to Winchester. In 1888, to show his affection for the people of Winchester, Judge Handley proposed a park for the city, but his friend Major Conrad persuaded him instead to help finance a large modern hotel that could serve as a summer resort. Handley chose to make the hotel only one of eleven enterprises of the Equity Improvement Company of Winchester, which he enthusiastically founded in 1889. A charter was granted to the company in 1890, with Handley as its president, and Major Conrad as vice-president. Stock was sold and predictions were made that the company would increase the material prosperity of the area and even boost the population of the city. The company purchased land in the suburbs of Winchester to lay off streets and lots for the eleven planned enterprises. A certain tract of seventy-two acres was purchased on the edge of the city, later known as "The Equity," to provide for the erection of a new school. The hotel was completed in 1891, but because of non-payment of assessments by stockholders, a general financial depression in the economy, and Handley's ailing health, it had to be sold and none of the other enterprises were begun. Judge Handley's death in 1895 brought an end to the Equity Improvement Company.²

Judge Handley was never a resident of Winchester or Frederick County, but his love for the people of the area was shown in many ways. He died in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on February 15, 1895 after a long period of illness. The Winchester Times of February 20, 1895 stated that he died "from the prevailing grip." Judge Handley had prearranged to be buried in the Mt. Hebron Cemetery in Winchester. Being a great admirer of Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, he tried to purchase a plot in the Stonewall Cemetery at Mt. Hebron to be buried among the Confederates, but because he had not fought with the Confederacy, this was not possible. However, he was able to purchase a plot across the lane and facing the Stonewall Cemetery. His funeral was held at Christ Episcopal Church in Winchester and is said to have been one of the largest in Winchester's history.³

At the reading of Judge Handley's will, the lives of the citizens of Winchester were changed forever. The document stated that the judge had bequeathed his fortune for two distinct purposes: Firstly, \$250,000 was to be invested by the leaders of Winchester until its value reached \$500,000 at which point a library was to be constructed. This building would be named The Handley Library and would serve the citizens of Winchester. Secondly, the remainder of his estate was to be invested over a twenty-year period and to be expended for the erection of schoolhouses for the education of the poor. This sum amounted to approximately \$1,650,000.⁴

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This trust, at the request of the mayor and Winchester City Council, was to be governed by the Handley Board of Trustees, created in 1896 by an act of the Virginia legislature as a fiduciary body to administer the gift. The board would invest the funds and carry out the requirements of the will of Judge Handley. Major Holmes Conrad was the first president.⁵

Education for the black children of Winchester can be traced back to 1878, when the Winchester Colored School opened in the Old Stone Church on East Piccadilly Street. Before this date, it is believed that school took place in various churches and homes in the city.

The Handley Board of Trustees began discussing a new school building in June 1925. The school board agreed to borrow \$15,000 from the state literary fund at 4% interest. A resolution was adopted which stated the building and furnishings could not cost more than \$25,000.⁶ A special called meeting was held on August 20, 1926 to discuss the delay in building the colored school. A resolution was passed authorizing the school board to submit a loan request to the State Literary Fund for \$15,000 at 3% interest. The Handley Board of Trustees agreed to supply funds as needed not to exceed \$15,000 total.⁷

The Kent Street building was designed by R. V. Long, a state architect.⁸ The building was constructed by Gardner and Newcome of Stephens City, Virginia.⁹ The building and furnishings totaled \$33,217.65. An article in The Winchester Star said the school was one of the most complete colored public school edifices in Virginia. The cornerstone was laid on Monday, September 5, 1927. The building consisted of six classrooms, a library, principal's office, storeroom, and boys and girls restrooms with shower facilities. The educational offerings were grades one through nine.

Douglas was expanded three times.¹⁰ In 1940, two classrooms were added.¹¹ A committee was formed on January 15, 1950 to study future needs at Douglas.¹² It was decided that a second expansion of the building was necessary to meet curriculum standards. Additional course offerings in science and shop were necessary as well as the inclusion of physical education and commercial subjects. The library also needed to be expanded.¹³ L. I. Poe was selected as the architect. This expansion included three classrooms, a gymnasium, a library, a kitchen, a shop, and two dressing rooms. The cost was \$156,585¹⁴ and the renovation was completed in December of 1951.¹⁵ The architect for the 1962 expansion was Smithey and Boynton. The estimated cost was \$79,000 and the builder was Hamman Construction Company. This expansion included one classroom and a new home economics room, science room, and a band and music room.

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The educational offerings increased to the tenth grade in 1939-1940 school year. The following year, the eleventh grade was added. The 1954 graduation class was the first class to complete a twelve-year program.

Douglas also provided the opportunity for black students living beyond the city limits to receive a high school education. An agreement between the Winchester and Frederick County School Boards allowed black students from Opequon and Stephens City to attend Douglas as early as 1934.¹⁶ Plans for a regional high school were discussed by Winchester's School Superintendent,¹⁷ other area superintendents, the State Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in 1948.¹⁸ The Warren County and Winchester school systems reached a tuition agreement in 1950. A similar agreement was established between Shenandoah County and Winchester, which included students from Woodstock and Strasburg, Virginia. Eventually all Frederick County black students attended high school at Douglas through the 1964-1965 school year.¹⁹ The first tuition was set at \$40.00 per year and was \$350.00 in the early 1960s. Students attending from areas outside of Winchester sometimes comprised 50 percent or more of the total graduating class.

Winchester School Board and the Recreation Department has had an on going relationship regarding the use of the Douglas grounds and facilities.²⁰ As early as 1945, the Recreation Association was granted permission to make improvements to the playground area.²¹ In the early 1950s, the Recreation Department had permission to use the school to provide recreation entertainment for black youth during the months of January and February on Monday and Tuesday evenings.²² In 1953, the Recreation Department was given permission to develop playground facilities for Negroes on the eastern part of the Douglas grounds. Supervised activities were offered during the summer months and the playground had a small pool at one time.

Douglas offered educational opportunities to the children of parents who came to the area to pick the peach and apple crops. Both elementary and high school students attended Douglas from opening day in September until early November. In 1961, an elementary school was established on the labor campgrounds. High school students continued to attend Douglas.

Although Douglas was given used textbooks and materials from Handley High School and the local white elementary schools, a dedicated staff of teachers did their best with the tools they were given and prepared many students for high school graduation as well as college. Over the years Douglas's athletic teams were recognized for their many achievements in football and basketball. The Music Department offered excellent training in band and glee club and both won many honors at festivals and competitions.

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Douglas pride can be noted in the fact that several generations of the same family have been a part of the educational process from beginning to end. A number of students graduated, went to college, and returned to teach or work as part of the administration. The entire black community turned out for graduation ceremonies and the crowd often overflowed from the auditorium onto the front lawn. Any program at Douglas was always well attended by parents as well as interested persons in the community.

Douglas closed as the all-black school in Winchester in the fall of 1966. The building later became Winchester Intermediate School which housed all seventh grade and part of the sixth grade students of Winchester. During the 1990s, the building served as the home of Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School when the old school was torn down and a new one was built. During this decade it also housed students from Quarles Elementary School while it was being renovated. The building now houses the Douglas Community Learning Center and continues to provide educational opportunities for the young people of Winchester.

There is also a police sub-station in the building. The Winchester School Board continues to allow Caretakers (an organization that provides tutoring, arts and craft classes and recreational opportunities for the children of the neighborhood) to meet daily in the building. The North End Citizens Group meets monthly in the building. Other neighborhood groups are encouraged and allowed to use the building as requested.

The grounds are used for the Family Day Celebration each year during the first weekend in August. The school has an active alumni association, whose primary goal is to raise funds for its scholarship fund. Each year financial support is given to a student from each of the local high schools, which include John Handley, James Wood, Sherando, Strasburg, and Central, to attend college. The alumni association also holds a school reunion each year. Former students and teachers get together to share fond memories of the building that played such an important part in their lives. For many their entire school years from the first through the twelfth grades were spent in this building.

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NOTES

1. Garland R. Quarles, Judge Handley and The Handley Bequests to Winchester, Virginia (Winchester, VA: The Farmers and Merchants National Bank, 1969), 1-33. Dr. Quarles was an educator in the Winchester Public Schools from 1927-1965, first as a teacher, then as Principal and Superintendent. After his retirement in 1965, he went to Scranton, Pennsylvania and Ireland to research the records of the school's benefactor, John Handley.

2. Ibid., 40-56.

3. Ibid., 56.

4. Ibid., 66.

5. Ibid., 74.

6. Handley Board of Trustees, "Handley Board of Trustees Minutes" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, June 25, 1925).

7. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, August 20, 1926), 15.

8. Handley Board of Trustees and Winchester School Board Joint Meeting, "Joint Meeting Minutes" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, March 29, 1927), 411.

9. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, 1927), 57-58.

10. Winchester School Board, "Winchester School Board Minutes" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, July 23, 1940).

11. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, January 15, 1950).

12. Garland R. Quarles, "Superintendent's Report" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, March 20, 1950).

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13. Winchester School Board, "Winchester School Board Minutes" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, July 15, 1950).

14. [Author unknown], "School Board Report to School Committee of City Council" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, March, 1953).

15. Winchester School Board, "Winchester School Board Minutes" (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, July 15, 1963).

16. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, September 17, 1934).

17. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, November 15, 1948).

18. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, May 15, 1980).

19. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, September 17, 1934).

20. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, October 16, 1961).

21. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, August 27, 1945).

22. Ibid., (Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, December 18, 1950).

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[Author unknown]. "School Board Report to School Committee of City Council."
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Handley Board of Trustees. "Handley Board of Trustees Minutes." Winchester, VA:
Handley Regional Library Archives, June 25, 1925 and August 20, 1926.

Handley Board of Trustees and Winchester School Board Joint Meeting. "Joint Meeting
Minutes." Winchester, VA: Handley Regional Library Archives, March 29, 1927, and
October 24, 1927.

Quarles, Garland R. Judge Handley and The Handley Bequests to Winchester,
Virginia. Winchester, VA: The Farmers and Merchants National Bank, 1969.

-----"Superintendent's Report." Winchester, VA: Garland R. Quarles, March 20,
1950.

Winchester School Board. "Winchester School Board Minutes." Winchester, VA:
Handley Regional Library Archives, September 17, 1934, July 23, 1940, August 27, 1945,
November 15, 1948, January 15, 1950, May 15, 1950, July 15, 1950, December 18, 1950, May
18, 1953, October 16, 1961, and July 15, 1963.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown as the solid black line on the accompanying map, entitled "Douglas School" which has a scale of 1" = 200'. A map of the 9.6 acre tract of land is noted in Deed Book 44, page 227 and Deed Book 77, page 165 found in the city of Winchester's office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries enclose the grounds and school and include a non-contributing building. A map of the 9.6-acre tract is noted in Deed Book 44, page 227 and Deed Book 77, page 165 found in the City of Winchester's office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

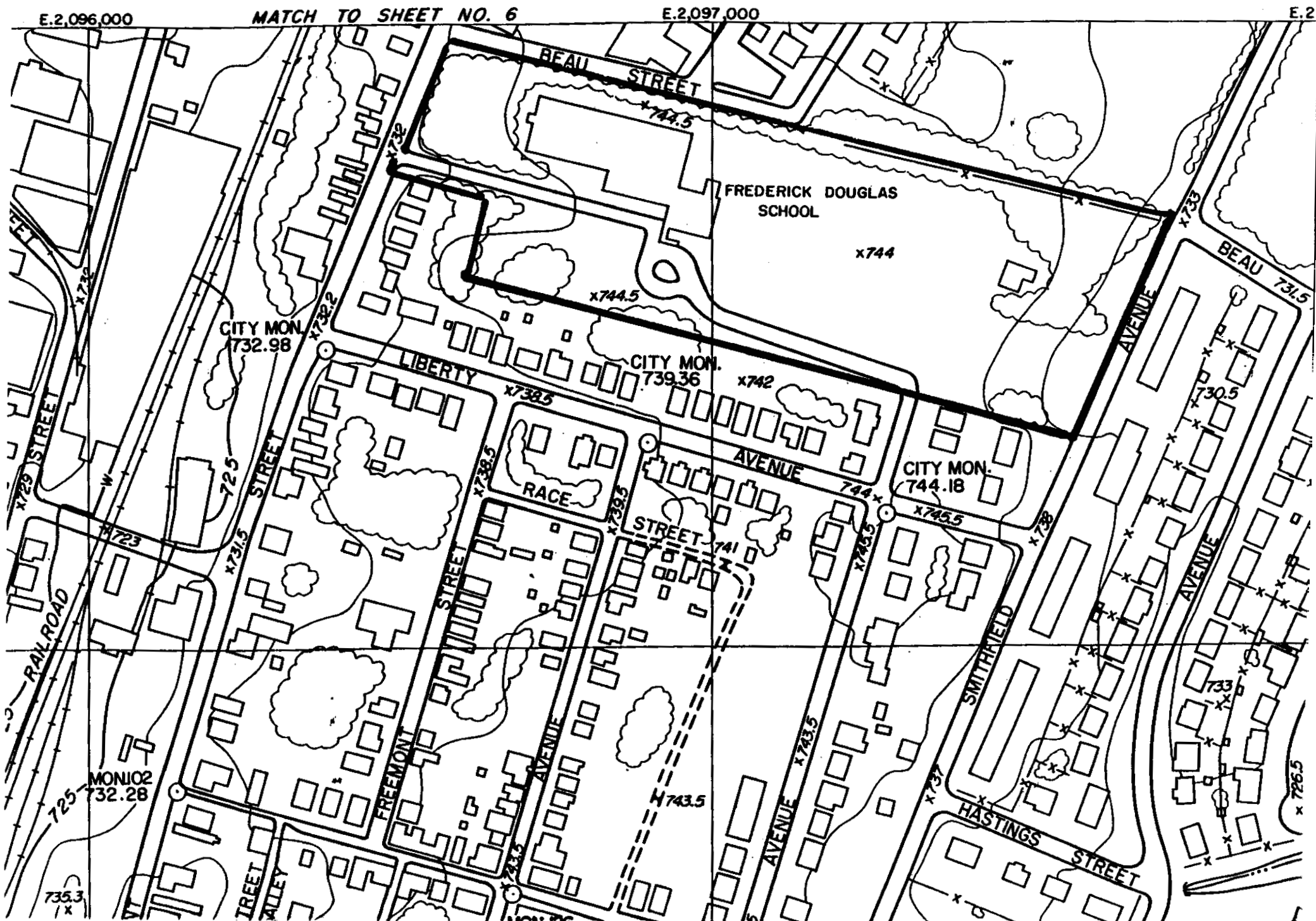
11. FORM PREPARED BY - continued

Virginia Department of Historic Resources Staff

Scott Brooks-Miller
Joanna J. Evans

\uparrow_N

E.2



DOUGLAS SCHOOL CITY OF WINCHESTER

1. N 4342084
E 745362
2. N 4342622
E 745341
3. N 4342009
E 745392
4. N 4341968
E 745380
5. N 4341889
E 745679
6. N 4341994
E 745722

WINCHESTER U.S.G.S.
QUADRANGLE

